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*The psychology of the Vedanta and Sankhya philosophies.—*

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THE Vedanta and Sankhya systems of philosophy are interesting as uniting, in each case, a very sharp and profound psychological insight with the most fantastic theories in regard to the practical bearing of this insight. This insight standing by itself, with no inhibiting ideas suggested by common sense, is taken to be the key that unlocks all the mysteries of the universe, and opens a way to final emancipation.

The insight upon which the Vedanta system rests is the subjective character of all experience. The Vedantist saw as clearly as Kant or Fichte, that the only world which exists for us is the creation of the productive imagination. This view is presented with absolute clearness. The entire universe is affirmed to be the work of Maya. It is pure illusion. It has no other substance than ignorance. This illusion we are told has two stages. It is first enveloping and then it is projected. These two forms of illusion are illustrated by this figure: A man sees a rope and thinks that it looks like a serpent. His next thought is that it is a serpent.<sup>1</sup> Thus do we create a world by the power of our imagination; then we project it and conceive it to be a world existing independently of our thought.

This unquestionably true view of the world is, as I have already intimated, carried by the Vedantist into its most extreme logical results. If all my experiences are subjective, if I stand in relation only with my own thoughts and feelings, and if the only world that I know anything about is made up of these, what right have I to assume the existence of any other world? What right have I to assume the existence of either things or persons outside myself? Thus the Vedantist passes beyond idealism and

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<sup>1</sup> Ballantyne's *Vedanta Lecture (Vedanta Sāra)*, § 20. As the object is to reach the views of these schools of thought, no difference is made in any of the references between what is said by an author and what is said by the native commentators whose words are associated with his in the translations.

comes to rest, theoretically at least, in solipsism, or the doctrine that the individual self, alone, is.

It is an interesting question as to the manner in which this insight was reached. Some maintain that it was based upon a misunderstanding of the Upanishads, to which Çankara gave the weight of his authority. Deussen, however, insists that the interpretation of Çankara is the true one, and claims that seventy-five per cent. of living Vedantists agree with him.<sup>1</sup> In this case it is not easy to say how the view was reached. We can see, however, how it is defended; and from this we may conjecture, if we will not forget that it is merely conjecture, what may have been at least one of the considerations that suggested it.

In the defense and illustration of this doctrine, reference is very freely made to the phenomena of dreams. A very curious and interesting treatise, in regard to the date of which I know nothing, was translated for the *Pandit* and runs through many numbers of that journal.<sup>2</sup> It is the only clear and consistent defense of solipsism that I have ever seen; consistent except in this, that the writer is striving to convince the reader, whereas according to his view only one of them exists. In this treatise the phenomena of dreams figure very prominently. The objector is represented as saying that if he alone exists, he ought to be the creator of all things. So you are, urges the author, if you are the one only, just as you are creator of all the objects of your dream. Again, the objector is represented as insisting that if there were but one being in the universe, when any one person is emancipated, all persons should be. So they are, replies the author, just as when you wake from a dream all the persons of whom you have dreamed cease to be.<sup>3</sup> So far as solipsism rests upon the phenomena of dreams, it occupies a position very interesting from a logical point of view. It involves a recognition of the parsimony of nature, even greater than that shown by Newton. If in the dream the soul may create a world for itself filled with persons and things, merely by the power of the constructive imagination, what need and what right have we to seek for any different source of any other world?

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<sup>1</sup> *Elements of Metaphysics* (English translation), p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Vidvan-Mano-Ranjini*, by Râma Tirtha, begun in the *Pandit* (first series), vol. vi. p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> *Pandit*, vii. 127, viii. 130, etc.

It is obvious that this view of the world suggests a method of escaping from it. One has merely to give up altogether one's belief in the reality of outside things and put a stop to the work of the imagination, and the soul remains in the bliss of empty solitude.

In the much misunderstood system of the Sāṅkhya we have an extremely interesting step in advance. It starts, substantially, from the position reached by the Vedānta, but brings to bear upon this a psychological insight even sharper than that which is found in that system. The most obvious difference is, that in the Sāṅkhya, Intellect takes the place which is filled by Illusion or Ignorance in the Vedānta. To it the substance of the world is Intellect. This does not mean that we find in the world marks of intelligence; but simply that Intellect is the *causa materialis* of the world, just as Illusion is the *causa materialis* of the world in the Vedānta. Thus the one system starts from a position as idealistic as that of the other.

We may here leave wholly out of the account *Prakṛiti*, which most unfortunately figures as Nature in the English translations. We might call it somewhat awkwardly "The Prior." Professor Garbe calls it the "Grundform" (*Sāṅkhya Philosophie*, 204). We are expressly told that it is posited merely to avoid a *regressus* into the infinite (*Aphorisms of Kapila*, i. 68). The Sāṅkhyans could not conceive of Intellect as existing without some *causa materialis* of its own, so they speak simply of that which was before.

As soon as *Prakṛiti* takes form as Intellect, it has no existence in any other form. It has nothing more to do with what follows than Chaos has to do with the Cosmos. So, as was just said, we may leave it altogether out of the account, and recognize Intellect as forming the substance of the world. This Intellect concentrates itself into self-consciousness, that is, into the *Me*. This *Me* differentiates itself on the one side into the inner organs of activity and sensation and the "Mind," and on the other side into the elements of the so-called material world, which are, in fact, only projected sensations. We are told distinctly that the eleven organs and the five subtle elements out of which the world was formed are the product of self-consciousness (*Aphorisms of Kapila*, iii. 17). How clearly this subjective character of the world was recognized by the Sāṅkhyans may be seen from a single

instance. A potter, we are told, makes a jar. He makes it out of his own self-consciousness. Why then, it is asked, does it not disappear when he becomes emancipated? The answer is that while on his emancipation there is an end of the modifications of his special intellect, Intellect remains. A certain intellectual continuum or community is thus assumed, very much as in the idealism of Fichte. From another point of view it is said, "Let the Self-consciousness of the *Deity* be the cause why jars and the like continue to exist" (*Aphorisms of Kapila*, i. 63).

Thus far the Sankhya system is as purely idealistic as the Vedanta, though not solipsistic, as it recognizes innumerable individuals.

After having reached this point, the student of the Sankhya is surprised and perhaps bewildered to find, over against the Intellect and the Self, with its thoughts, its feelings, and its will, a something that is called *Purusha* and *Ātman*. These words in the English translation are represented by the word Soul. This substitution, though perhaps not to be avoided, is as unfortunate as that of Nature for *Prakriti*. The two words Nature and Soul, taken together, suggest a thoroughly realistic view of the world, whereas the system, as we have seen, is, at its foundation, idealistic. What sort of 'soul' is that which stands outside of intellect, feeling, and will?

This *Purusha*, we are told in many ways, is simply a beholder. It neither feels nor thinks nor wills. It seems to do them all. It seems to be glad or sorry, to hope or to fear. In point of fact it simply contemplates these emotions and acts. A favorite comparison that the Sankhya writers use to illustrate this relation is that of a crystal vase over which hangs the red flower of the Hibiscus (*Aphorisms of Kapila*, ii. 35, and iv. 22). The color of the flower is reflected from the crystal so that the crystal appears to be red. In fact it is not red, it is absolutely colorless. Another example is that of a king who seems to be carrying on war, while really it is his generals that are carrying on the war (*Aphorisms of Kapila*, ii. 29). This *Purusha* manifests itself by affirming itself over against the body. It speaks of 'my body' (*Aphorisms of Kapila*, vi. 3 and 4). But, it is urged, we speak of the body of a statue, and yet the statue and its body are one. The answer that is given to this objection is not so perfectly to the point as it might be. The writer fails to bring out the real difference that was undoubtedly in his mind, which is, that it is

not the statue that speaks of the statue's body. In the statue itself there is not this line of cleavage. The body of the statue exists for us, not for it. We are told that to speak of the intelligence of Puruṣa is like speaking of the body of a statue, for Puruṣa *is* intelligence. On the other hand, to speak of the mind, that is the complete mental activity of Puruṣa, introduces a foreign element such as we introduce when we speak of its body.

The Puruṣa is evidently the pure consciousness abstracted from all content. We are, for instance, conscious of walking ; but the consciousness does not walk. So, to these thinkers, while we are conscious of reasoning, the consciousness does not reason. We are conscious of suffering, but the consciousness does not suffer. The consciousness is only the beholder (*Sāṅkhya Karika*, 19, 20, *et passim*).

The distinction here made is one that is familiar to our modern psychology, though psychologists take different attitudes in regard to it. Self-consciousness—and all consciousness is in a sense self-consciousness—involves two elements, the subject and the inner object. These two elements are sometimes spoken of as the *I* and the *Me*. These two elements are in our modern thought not outwardly or accidentally related. Neither precedes or follows the other ; neither can exist apart from the other. Consciousness is a process all parts and stages of which spring into existence at the same moment. There is the fundamental unity, the differentiation into the *I* and the *Me*, and the recognition of the two as one and the same. The *I* recognizes the *Me* as itself, though the two are antithetic to one another. The *I* cannot be conscious of the *I* but only of the *Me*. If the *I* becomes the object of consciousness, it is transformed into the *Me*.

We use the term *I* in other senses. We sometimes mean by it the concrete personality. So far, however, as it represents the element of pure consciousness, it would seem hardly possible to define it in terms different from those applied to *Puruṣa* or *Ātman* by the Sāṅkhyans.

They give us, however, something more than the fact of this resemblance. In the fourth chapter of the Aphorisms of Patañjali we find the question of consciousness directly discussed. In this discussion the double aspect of consciousness is recognized as distinctly as I have just recognized it. As we have seen, the Sāṅkhyans reached recognition of this division in consciousness, but felt obliged to give to each element an independent existence.

Patanjali illustrates and defends this. In this book we read, "The thinking principle is not self-illuminating, since it is perceptible" (xviii.); in a note it is added "A perceptible is known by a percipient, as in the case of a water jar, and so forth." Again we read in reference to *Purusha* or the *Ego*, on the one side, and the thinking principle, or mind, on the other—the *I* and the *Me*: "Attention cannot be directed to both at the same time. It is not possible to behold oneself and another at the same time" (iv. 19). The differentiation in consciousness into the *I* and the *Me* is thus recognized; but because it is fundamental in the system that no element can have more than one attribute, the knower cannot be known.

An objector is represented as urging that self-consciousness may be the result of memory, or, as it is expressed, that one cognition may cognize another, and that thus the necessity of two elements could be avoided. It is replied, "If one cognition could cognize another, then that cognition being itself unintelligent and unable to illuminate another, we must assume a third cognition, and so on" (iv. 20). That is, if my present self-consciousness is the result of memory, then that which is remembered must have been self-conscious. For this must be presupposed a previous moment of self-consciousness, and so on into the infinite.

I do not defend this reasoning. I wish merely to indicate that these writers discussed the phenomena of self-consciousness with as clear an understanding of the problem as we can have to-day, and that they solved it by supposing the consciousness to be made up of two separately existing elements.

The recognition of this objective element in consciousness made it easier perhaps for the Sankhyan to escape the solipsistic view to which the Vedantists were driven.

The Sankhyan system is interesting as occupying a position absolutely unique. It is, in its foundation, idealistic, for, as we have seen, all things consist of intellect; the material world being a development of self-consciousness. If we mean by the soul that which thinks and feels, then for the Sankhyan there is no existence outside of soul. Thus it stands where the Vedanta stands. Yet within the soul it finds both subject and object, the *I* and the *Me*. These, it insists, must be separate entities. Its lines of division are drawn within the sphere recognized by the Vedanta. It accepts the fundamental psychological doctrine of the Vedanta, but out of this it develops something that has been taken

for realism. It is thus a system that sets our terminology at defiance. I have called it idealistic ; but it is an idealism that embraces a dualism. There is only Soul, in our ordinary use of the word soul, but it is a soul made up of two entities ; and we cannot easily avoid speaking of the half that is emancipated as in a special sense the soul, as in fact the Sāṅkhyans themselves did in the word *Ātman*. From this analysis it will appear how mistaken is the view that considers the idea of the soul as having almost faded out of this system.<sup>1</sup> If, from the fact that Puruṣha plus Intellect and the rest, corresponds to the Soul of the Vedānta, we call the resultant whole the soul, we have a very concrete significance for the word. If, on the other hand, as we more naturally do, we restrict the term soul to *Puruṣha*, we have an extremely clear cut and definite significance.

If it is urged that after all *Prakṛiti* and its products are in a sense material, it must be answered that the word can have no significance in this connection. We use the word 'matter' to express the result of a generalization. The materialist urges that thoughts and feelings are the result of processes such as are going on in the world of things in the midst of which we live. The word brings these subjective elements into relation with innumerable other elements that seem at first sight wholly foreign to them. To the Sāṅkhyan there is no such world. Besides *Puruṣha* there is nothing that is not developed out of Intellect, through self-consciousness. The word 'matter' would be here as meaningless as a scholastic quiddity.<sup>2</sup> The forms assumed by *Prakṛiti* are not merely the causes of thoughts and feelings. They *are* thoughts and feelings. The whole story is that, as we have seen, the Vedāntists affirmed that the substantial cause of the world is Ignorance. For the convenience of their reasonings they insisted that this was at once something and nothing. The Sāṅkhyan pointed out the absurdity of this (*Aphorisms*, i. 24), put Intellect in the place of Ignorance, and claimed for it substantiality.

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<sup>1</sup> This is implied by Professor Garbe. He affirms that it was only a step from the view of the soul held by the Sāṅkhyans to the denial of its existence by the Buddhists (*Sāṅkhya Philosophie*, 302).

<sup>2</sup> The reader of the *Aphorisms* must not be misled by the rejection of the view that there is nothing besides thought (i. 42, and elsewhere), for thought here refers to the *quasi* thought of *Puruṣha*, as is distinctly affirmed in i. 105. It is the reality of the results of *Prakṛiti* that is insisted on.

It is obvious that a system like the Sankhya could be developed only out of a system idealistic like the Vedanta, though not necessarily solipsistic. This fact corresponds with the conclusion reached by Professor Garbe that, while the Sankhyan view of the world is very ancient, it is yet later than the earliest Upanishads (*Sāṅkhya Philosophie*, 7). The view of the Sankhya system here presented throws light upon the early blending of it with the Vedanta system exhibited by Father Dahlmann in his interesting work on *Nirvana*. As the Sankhya has been generally understood, this community would be very strange if not impossible. It would be a union of Idealism and Realism. Now, however, we see that it is something that might well have been expected. It implies, indeed, that the idea of a multiplicity of 'souls' is not fundamental to the Sankhya ; and this is what our analysis would lead us to assume.

With the general aspects of the system I have here nothing to do. I will merely state in conclusion, that emancipation is reached by a separation of Purusha from the Intellect in its various forms—the *I* from the *Me*. It is as if we should separate the north pole from the south. Intellect, including the *Me* with all its content, reverts to that condition called *Prakriti*, of which it is only a form, while the *Ego*, the pure subject of consciousness, remains wholly without object or content, intelligence but not intelligent ; not positively blessed,—for the same cannot both know and feel,—but negatively blessed in the fact that it is free from entanglement with the changeful products of *Prakriti*. Here, as in the Vedanta, salvation consists in freedom from the network of ignorance. That which is, and all along has been, remains, freed from all complication with that which merely seems.